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CHAPTER 1
CREATION

*H*OW could anyone possibly know how the world began? Nobody was there taking notes when it happened! And how could anyone know what was in the mind of God when He made the first man and woman? No one could know these things unless God Himself took the initiative to tell somebody. And that is precisely what He did.

We can reasonably assume that God spoke with Adam and Eve about His joy in creating the universe and that they passed these stories on to their children. But stories that are handed down from generation to generation in this way become distorted, and so it is important to realize that God revealed these things more directly.

Later in our journey, we will meet with Moses. God appeared to him visibly and spoke to him audibly (Numbers 12:8). This unique privilege of speaking with God face to face enabled Moses to write what God gave him to say in the first five books of the Bible.

THE CREATOR IS THE OWNER

The first thing God wants you to know is that He is your Creator. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). That’s important, because a creator always has the rights of ownership over anything that he or she has made. God wants you to know that He is the Creator and therefore the owner of everything, including you.

That tells you something magnificent, not only about God but also about yourself. You are not an accident of history whose existence is the result of certain atoms colliding by random chance. God made you on purpose, and you will discover that purpose as you come to know Him.

A BREATHTAKING INITIATIVE

Try to imagine the Creator at work. Day after day God added new dimensions to His creation: light, sky, seas, vegetation, the sun, moon, and stars, fish, birds, and animals. Each was conceived in the mind of God, and when He spoke, He called them into being. As each creative act was completed, God reviewed His work and announced that it was good.

It was at this point that God crowned His creation with a breathtaking initiative. “God said, ‘Let us make man in our image’” (Genesis 1:26).

God made you to reflect something of His own nature and glory so that as people look at you they would see some reflection of God Himself. This is what gives unique dignity and value to every human life. All of the animals were made by God, but none of them were made like God.

ENJOYING THE GOODNESS OF GOD

Adam enjoyed life in a garden called Eden, which God had planted near the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers (Genesis 2:8–14). While we can’t pinpoint its exact location, it was probably somewhere in the area of modern Iraq.

Life in Eden was awesome. It was so different from anything we have experienced that it is difficult for us to grasp. But it is well worth using our imagination to try.

Adam enjoyed the privilege of working in direct partnership with God. His first task was to name the animals as God brought them to him (Genesis 2:19).

Giving names may not sound like significant work, but actually this was the first scientific endeavor. Science, at its heart, is about observing, classifying, and describing, and that was the first work God gave Adam to do.

Everything Adam needed was provided in the garden. When he was hungry, he only needed to reach up and pick the fruit from the trees. His work was fulfilling, he was protected from danger, and he enjoyed perfect health. It was heaven on earth.

The greatest joy of life in Eden was the immediate, visible presence of God. God is Spirit, and so He is invisible to us. But in the Garden of Eden, God took on a visible form so that Adam could know Him. We call this a theophany. God came and walked with Adam in the garden (Genesis 3:8).

A MARRIAGE MADE IN HEAVEN

God saw that it was not good for Adam to be alone, and so the Lord made a woman and brought her to the man (Genesis 2:18, 22). Imagine Adam's delight when God made the introduction!

God could have created Eve and left the two of them to find each other in the garden. But He didn't do that. God was actively involved in bringing the two of them together. Try to picture God joining their hands and giving His blessing on their shared life together.

The first couple would face their share of problems in the future, but they could never doubt that they had been joined together by God. That is true of every marriage, and that is why marriage is sacred.

A View from the Mountain

Pause for a moment to take in this view of the world as God made it. Imagine what it must have been like to live in this perfect environment, sharing the joys of a loving and intimate marriage, growing in knowledge, experience, and skill through creative and fulfilling work, and most of all cultivating a deep relationship with God, whose visits to the garden brought great delight.

Life as we know it is only a shadow of the mountaintop experience our first parents enjoyed in Eden. God wants you to know what their life was like and how you can recover what has been lost.

It's time to leave the first mountain of the Bible story. We move on reluctantly, because the next stop on our journey is a deep valley.

We have made some wonderful discoveries here. God is the Creator of all things. He made everything good. He has created men and women in His own image, giving unique dignity and value to every life.

Some may believe that life is richer when God is at a distance, but the mountaintop experience of life in the Garden of Eden teaches us that life is never richer than when God is near.